

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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DRAFTED BY ARA/ECP:WDBURSON:SAB
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L/ARA:GCHESTER (INFO)
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O 271658Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 205641

STADIS////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELTN, EAGR, CO

SUBJECT: SENIOR REVIEW-CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING

1. DEPARTMENT REGRETS THAT IT WILL BE UNABLE TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE SENIOR REVIEW-CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING IN BOGOTA AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 1. AS WE ARE SURE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND, PREPARATIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS RELATED TO PANAMA TREATY SIGNING HAVE RESULTED IN A HEAVY AND URGENT WORKLOAD FOR THE ENTIRE BUREAU. THIS SITUATION IS COMPLICATED BY ALREADY LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF ECONOMIC PERSONNEL. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WE UNFORTUNATELY HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO CURTAIL TRAVEL DURING THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AND REQUEST THAT EMBASSY UNDERTAKE COORDINATION TO GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF DELEGATION.

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2. IN RECENT INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON POSITION TO BE TAKEN BY U.S. DELEGATION, THERE WAS A CONSENSUS THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO CONVEY TO THE GOC THAT WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT REQUIRING IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FMD PROGRAM IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE OUR COOPERATION. SPECIFICALLY, WE WANT THE GOC TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION, SAY WITHIN 90 DAYS, TO RESOLVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS IN THE PROGRAM. THE ESSENTIAL

ELEMENT IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT COMMISSION WHICH

WOULD REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE IN COLOMBIA AND CARRY OUT ITS OWN ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS (OR POSSIBLY SOME ALTERNATIVE, MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE ARRANGEMENT WHICH ACCOMPLISHES THE SAME PURPOSE).

3. AN NSC POLICY REVIEW WOULD BE NECESSARY TO REACH A DECISION TO RETIRE U.S. PARTICIPATION FROM THE FMD PROGRAM AT LEAST UNTIL THERE WAS AMPLE EVIDENCE OF GREATER PRIORITY BEING PLACED ON THE PROGRAM BY THE GOC. THE INVOLVED AGENCIES APPEAR TO BE READY TO RECOMMEND ADOPTION OF SUCH A POLICY IF THE COLOMBIANS ARE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO PERMIT EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF THE PROGRAM.

4. THE PROBLEM IS HOW TO CONVEY TO THE COLOMBIANS THAT THIS TIME OUR COMMENTS OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF WITHDRAWAL ARE REAL. WE HAVE MADE SUCH STATEMENTS AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS WITH LITTLE PROGRESS BEING SUBSEQUENTLY ACHIEVED. WE CANNOT SAY THAT A POLICY DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO WITHDRAW IF NO ACTION IS TAKEN. AT THE SAME TIME, WE DO NOT WANT THEM TO BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE IF SUCH A DECISION IS TAKEN. EMBASSY SHOULD ENSURE THAT GOC UNDERSTANDS FULL IMPLICATIONS OF U.S. POSITION.

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5. WHILE FURTHER HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION IS CONTINGENT ON USDA DETERMINING THAT AN EFFECTIVE FMD PROGRAM IS IN PLACE, DESIGN AND SURVEY WORK COULD CONTINUE IF APPEAL OF THE PRESENT INJUNCTION IS SUCCESSFUL. THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE HIGHWAY PROGRAM IS MORE COMPLEX THAN THAT OF THE FMD PROGRAM. HOWEVER, WITHDRAWAL OF THE FMD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WOULD RAISE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT DESIGN AND SURVEY WORK SHOULD BE CONTINUED.

6. COPY OF POSITION PAPER BEING FORWARDED WITH OTHER DELEGATION MEMBERS. CHRISTOPHER

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